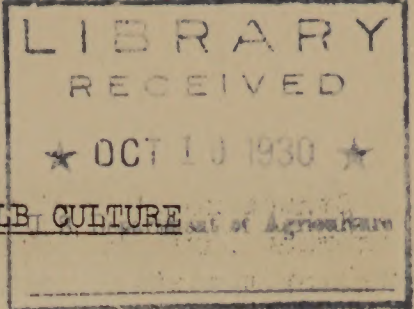


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THE PROGRESSIVE GARDEN CLUB TAKES UP BULB CULTURE

Radio talks and interviews by David I. Griffith, senior horticulturist, F. L. Mulford, associate horticulturist, and Mr. W. R. Beattie, senior horticulturist, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through WRC and 37 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, September 23, 1930.

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ANNOUNCEMENT:- (Mr. Salisbury) We have organized a new club and we call it the Progressive Garden Club. This club will hold its meetings "on the Air" as a part of the Farm and Home Hour program on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Every one of you is invited to become a member of this new club, and to send us questions about gardening. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss topics that are of timely interest to many of you who are endeavoring to improve the appearance of your home surroundings. The little group of gardeners and homemaking enthusiasts, who constitute the present membership of the Progressive Garden Club, are here today, ready for their first meeting "on the air" - - - Here they are (Babble of voices - - - Chairman raps for order - - - conversation gradually subsides, ending with one clear voice)

CHAIRMAN:- The Progressive Garden Club will please come to order. Won't you folks who are in the back of the room come forward and occupy these front seats? - - - (Room noises, rattling of chairs) Thank you, that's better, now we can proceed with the meeting.

The purpose of these meetings is to discuss problems that we are meeting in the improvement of our home surroundings. Our subject today is especially timely -- the planting and care of bulbs. We are fortunate, ladies and gentlemen, in having as one of our speakers a man who is well qualified to give advice on bulb planting. I refer to Mr. Furman Lloyd Mulford of the Horticultural Division of the United States Department of Agriculture. Before Mr. Mulford takes the floor, however, I want to suggest that our speakers today will not object to being interrupted by any questions that members of the club may wish to ask. It gives me great pleasure to present Mr. Mulford.

MR. MULFORD:- Members of the Progressive Garden Club and Friends.

I am glad to greet you and to discuss with you the interesting topic of making your home grounds beautiful with spring flowering bulbs. The best known bulbs for the purpose are narcissi, tulips, and hyacinths, often included under the term Holland bulbs, because the supplies of them formerly came from Holland and made the bulk of the importation of Holland bulbs.

MRS. CARPENTER:- Excuse me Mr. Mulford, but is this the proper time to plant bulbs?

MR. MULFORD:- For best results it is time for the bulbs to be in the ground, except in the more southern sections. You folks who live <sup>in</sup> the northern tiers

(over)



of States need to plant now just as soon as possible. Those of you who live somewhat farther south should also plant your bulbs soon, but a delay of a week or two will not be so important, while those of you in the more southern sections have a month or possibly 6 weeks in which to plant.

MR. TEUTON:- Where would you plant bulbs, Mr. Mulford?

MR. MULFORD:- They may be planted in irregular masses along the edges of the shrubbery groups that are already about the foundation of the house or bordering the front lawn. They may be used in scattered groups in the herbaceous border or as edgings to beds in the garden or as solid beds to themselves in the garden. They should not be used in straight lines along the foundation of the house or along the approach walk to the house or as beds either round or irregular in the front lawn.

MISS VAN DEMAN:- How about the soil for bulbs, Mr. Mulford? I'd like to have your advice on the best soil in which to plant my bulbs.

MR. MULFORD:- Bulbs may be planted in any well drained soil that has been well enriched. They do well on almost any kind of soil that will grow good garden crops. They must not, however, come in direct contact with manure. For this reason it is desirable whenever possible to manure the ground heavily early in the season and then grow a summer crop on it before setting the bulbs. In garden culture this is not always possible so that it may be necessary to use rotted manure spaded into the soil just before planting the bulbs, and then watch carefully while planting so that no manure comes directly in contact with the bulbs themselves.

MR. DAILEY:- But suppose you cannot get manure -- and most gardeners cannot -- what kind of fertilizer would you recommend?

MR. MULFORD:- Cottonseed meal, ground bone or a complete fertilizer having an analysis of at least 4 per cent nitrogen, 10 per cent phosphoric acid, and 6 per cent potash, may be used. After the ground has frozen, a good coating of manure on the surface prevents alternate freezing and thawing during the winter and adds desirable fertility for the bulbs. Don't forget, however, that if such a mulch is applied before the ground is frozen it often provides a winter home for ground mice that will eat tulips and hyacinths, but will not disturb narcissi as the latter are poisonous if eaten. The coarsest of this mulch should be removed early in the spring before the bulbs come up. --- Didn't I hear a question over in that corner of the room?

MR. TEUTON:- Yes, I'd like to ask if it is necessary to prepare the soil for bulbs as deeply as the bulletins recommend?

MR. MULFORD:- Yes, under most circumstances, the soil for bulbs should be prepared to a depth of 10 inches or more if the nature of the sub-soil permits. Bulbs are not likely to grow satisfactorily in soils that are not at least 8 inches deep. The bulbs should be planted so that there will be 4 inches of soil over them. They should be set from 4 to 8 inches apart for tulips and



hyacinths, depending on the size of the bulbs that are being used. Narcissi are usually put farther apart because they may be left in the ground for 3 or 4 years and giving them more room will allow for increase. Tulips should be dug each year as the foliage begins to die. Hyacinths may be dug every year or permitted to remain in the ground longer. Digging should be done as the tops begin to wither in early summer, the bulbs dried and kept in a dark place until planting time in the fall.

MRS. CARPENTER: I want something that will bloom very early in the spring -- is there any kind of bulb I can plant?

MR. MULFORD: There are a number of small bulbs that come early in the season. Among these are snowdrops, glory-of-the-snow and crocus. Snowdrops often come almost as soon as snow has melted from over them, the others coming a little later. Crocus are most familiar as patches of blue, white or yellow scattered through the lawn, but if grown there, must be renewed each year.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Mulford, I'd like to have some of these small bulbs other places too. Where else may small bulbs be planted?

MR. MULFORD: All these small bulbs are well adapted to planting in irregular masses near shrubbery, in borders in other nooks and corners, including rock gardens of rich moist soil. They are hardly large enough and showy enough to be well adapted to mass plantings in the way the large bulbs are used. Now, are there any more questions?

MR. DAILEY: I'd like to ask how deep to plant the smaller kinds of bulbs?

MR. MULFORD: About 2 or 3 inches deep and 3 to 4 inches apart. They may be left for several years, then if they have made a good growth, they may be dug as the foliage dies, be separated, and in the fall be replanted with as much of the increase as seems desirable.

CHAIRMAN: We appreciate, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Mulford's courtesy in coming to our meeting today and giving us this splendid talk on bulb planting. We are also fortunate in having with us another bulb enthusiast and we now have the pleasure of hearing Mr. David Griffiths of the Department of Agriculture, who, perhaps has done more than any other person to make commercial bulb growing in this country a success. We will now hear from Dr. Griffiths----

DR. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Chairman, and members of the Progressive Garden Club:

I am not going to make a speech. Have no time to prepare one; in fact, not more than an hour ago I was out at the Arlington Experiment Farm where we are now planting bulbs for our experimental investigations.

Have just recently finished planting on Puget Sound, and must within the next two weeks get our bulb stocks into the ground in both North and South Carolina.

(over)



You see bulbs have a long season for planting as well as blossoming. We begin planting daffodils on Puget Sound in early August and finish in South Carolina the middle of October.

I am not going to take time to tell you why we plant so early in the North and so late in the South, but simply going to advise you that now is the time to plant, but if you can't do it now, it is better to plant later than not at all.

You gardeners have a wonderful array of bulbous material to select from at this time of the year. Genus after genus, each with a multiplicity of varieties, are available to you. You can begin with the winter-blossoming snowdrops and continue them until the daffodils come if the varieties are properly selected. If you choose you can scatter in the golden winter aconite to blossom with the late, chaste snowdrops.

The small, early blue-flowering bulbous plants are charming. One should not forget glory-of-the-snow, and the striped, 2-leaved and Siberian squills, which are among our most dainty of spring flowers. The tulips and the daffodils are standard, present endless diversity, and are limitless in their application. If one desires a riot of color, the crocus will furnish it in purple, violet, yellow, and white.

The biggest mistake made by the average gardener is in planting too few bulbs. Instead of a bulb or two, a hundred or two should be the rule. If any of you have an ambition to make a show with a half dozen each of a dozen varieties of tulips, try once to make a show with 50 or 100 each of one or two varieties. In many situations a bank of one color is most satisfactory. In all cases the planting should be done with a lavish hand. I made a bulb border once. It was 4 feet wide and 100 feet long. Into this area, 400 square feet, I crowded about 30 varieties selected from about 10 genera. There was a total of 2,500 bulbs. The result was good but too thin, so another 1,000 bulbs were added the next year to make the planting complete. However, if it seems inadvisable to plant 1,000 bulbs plant 100, and if that seems a lot put in 10. In later years the habit will grow on one, and the quantity will almost automatically increase.

We not only commend the bulb items to you for the embellishment of your homes in springtime, but recommend them in quantity. The more used the greater the satisfaction and enjoyment they will give.

MR. TEUTON: What bulbs can be grown commercially and profitably in this country?

DR. GRIFFITHS: Commerce must decide on profits of commercial culture. We can tell you what are now grown apparently at a profit. Probably the best examples are narcissus, tulips, lilies, amaryllis, bulbous irises, tuberose, gladiolus, freesias, callas. There are scores of other genera of greater or less importance which have promise. No one has yet demonstrated the monetary return of hyacinths, crocuses, colchicums, snowdrops, squills, grape hyacinths, snowflakes, glory-of-the-snow, -- all of which can be grown and probably profitably.



MISS VAN DEMAN: How about the home gardener, Dr. Griffiths? Can an amateur grow bulbs for planting?

DR. GRIFFITHS: The amateur gardener can grow bulbs for planting, especially for his own purposes, and as good as any that are offered for sale on the markets. When he enters the commercial field, however, he is confronted by the necessity of having quantity to offer unless he sells at retail, which means cataloging and advertising. Like any other business the bulb business requires capital in order to produce in sufficient quantity to command respect of the trade.

MR. DAILEY: What kind of soil is best for growing narcissus bulbs?

DR. GRIFFITHS: Narcissus will grow equally well on sandy and clay loams, and the bulbs seem to benefit from an occasional shift from one type of soil to the other. The one prime requisite for good daffodil culture is what may be called a friable loam.

MRS. CARPENTER: What are the main differences in the growing of narcissus and tulip bulbs?

DR. GRIFFITHS: So far as planting and digging are concerned there is not a great deal of difference between the tulip and the daffodil. The main difference comes in the methods required for handling during the storage season, daffodils requiring much more aeration and being injured much less by over-exposure, during the long, so-called dormant season, to currents of air, and excessive drying out.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Do please tell us, Dr. Griffiths, what is the difference between narcissus and jonquils? Somebody is always asking me, and I'd like to have it straight from a bulb expert.

DR. GRIFFITHS: There is great confusion in the use of names in the genus *Narcissus*. We use "*Narcissus*" as a generic scientific name. We also use the same appellation as a common name, and the terms are synonymous. There is another term, "daffodil," used as a common name, and it is also synonymous with the two previous ones. Strictly speaking, the name "jonquil" should be applied to the rushleaved members of the genus *Narcissus* only; in other words, derivatives of *Narcissus jonquilla*. In a trade sense the name jonquil has come to be applied very largely to the trumpet daffodils which is unfortunate.

MR. TEUTON: Dr. Griffiths, would you suggest the names of about five good varieties of narcissus?

DR. GRIFFITHS: I could name one or possibly two hundred good varieties of narcissus easier than I could five. The question seems to presuppose the five best varieties of daffodils. However, were I to be confined to five varieties and my means were in any way limited, I should probably select King Alfred, Van Waveren's Giant, Golden Frilled, Bernardino, Glory of Lisse. I wish to warn you, however, that if you ask me this question tomorrow I shall undoubtedly give you a different list.

(over)



MR. DAILEY: How about varieties of tulips?

DR. GRIFFITHS: The varieties of tulips like those of daffodils are a legion, and there are many groups from which to select. There are said to be over three thousand varieties of Darwin tulips alone, and all of them have been put on the market within the memory of the present generation. The Darwins are by far the most popular at the present time. For my garden use this year I have selected City of Haarlem, Giant, Zwanenburg, Mrs. Moon, Madame Krelage.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you Dr. Griffiths and I am sure that I voice the sentiment of every member of the club when I extend to both Mr. Mulford and Dr. Griffiths our thanks and appreciation for the information they have given us. The club will now stand adjourned until the fourth Tuesday in October.